

WYCOMBE Wanderers clinched their first double of the season on Saturday when they came away from Hendon with three points. A late goal by George Brooks made the scoreline appear narrow but the truth is that Wanderers were firmly in command throughout this Isthmian League Premier Division encounter.

Since the arrival of Roger Day and Farouk Quirashi and the return to a 4-3-3 formation with Mick Holifield playing up front, Wanderers have looked an entirely different side. They carried on where they left off at Staines last Tuesday and were good value for their victory, a repeat of the score at Loakes Park a fortnight ago.

Strangely, neither Day nor Quirashi have set the side alight with brilliant performance but their experience and hard graft have instilled fresh confidence into a Wycombe team that was at a low ebb after the home

defeat by Tooting. Since then, the Blues have gone from strength to strength.

One of the reasons for the improvement is the elimination of errors throughout the team. With midfield operating well and cutting out many of their passing mistakes, Wanderers look far more balanced, especially so now they are playing with three forwards where Holifield gives much needed width to the attack.

Given time, this Wycombe side could develop into a formidable outfit but there is still room for another striker up front.

Conditions at Claremont Road were far from ideal on Saturday with a strong, swirling wind and a bumpy pitch making life difficult for the players. Bearing that in mind, Wycombe deserve full praise for a useful performance. They gave

Hendon a lesson in the art of passing and cashed in fully as the home side repeatedly gave the ball away through poor distribution.

The Blues were forced to make one change, Graham Mackenzie coming back into midfield which meant Paul Birdseye reverting to right back and Bob Davies wearing the number three shirt. This was because left back Steve Vass was ruled out through injury.

Wanderers faced the stiff wind in the first half and were soon back pedalling as Hendon hoisted huge kicks downfield. But the Blues back four were more than match for Hendon's forwards and with Keith Mead and Davies outstanding, they withstood Hendon's early raids fairly comfortably.

MORE EFFECTIVE

In contrast to Hendon's basic kick and rush tactics,

Wycombe's football looked more classy and effective. Both Holifield and Dylan Evans went close while Tony Horseman spurned a good chance when only half hitting his shot at the far post from three yards out.

The Blues got their reward after 37 minutes when they took a deserved lead. Birdseye's long throw caused the damage. The ball was headed out to him by a defender and his cross was driven home by Horseman. Although 'Bogger' mis-hit his shot it was enough to beat stranded 'keeper Arthur Paisley.

Dave Holden began the second half with a shot that bounced awkwardly in front of John Maskell and Hendon made most of the early running as Wanderers failed to find their earlier effort and work rate.

Nevertheless they continued to look the better side and it was no surprise when they went further ahead after 63 minutes. The home side had looked suspect from set pieces in the first half and it was from a corner that the Blues scored their second. Holifield's flag kick curled into the box where Mead got up well to power in a header from 10 yards. Former Wanderer Gary Hand and 'keeper Paisley got in each other's way and the ball beat them both just under the crossbar.

13-1 ON CORNERS

Wanderers piled up further corners — they had 13 compared with Hendon's one — and looked to be cruising happily to victory when Hendon struck back in the 70th minute. Tony Field's clever back heel sent Roy Butler scurrying down the wing. Maskell came out for the cross but was challenged by Brooks — possibly unfairly — and as the ball bounced loose, Brooks stabbed home a shot which found the net via the left upright.

Thus encouraged, Hendon fought hard to steal share of the points but Wycombe's defence allowed them just one further chance, two minutes from time. Evans and Davies got in a tangle inside their own penalty area and Brooks drove the ball low across goal with no-one able to get a touch.

A Hendon equaliser would have been something of an injustice, for on the day Wycombe were clearly the superior side.

HENDON: A. Paisley, P. Anderson, P. Deadman, A. Campbell, G. Hand, R. Southam, R. Heider, D. Holden, S. Jeffries (Sub A. Field 58 mins), R. Butler, G. Brooks.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell, P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, R. Davies, G. Mackenzie (sub S. Pratt 81 mins), R. Day, F. Quirashi, A. Horseman, D. Evans, M. Holifield.

Referee: D. Hedges (Oxford).

Half time: 0-1. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Horseman (37), Mead (63). Hendon — Brooks (70).



SURPRISE, SURPRISE! Wycombe Wanderers have been drawn away from home in the first round of the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup this season. The Blues travel to Maidenhead United on Saturday, November 19.

This is Wycombe's 11th consecutive away draw in the Senior Cup and the odds against that happening are a staggering 2,048 to one! The visit to Isthmian League Division One club Maidenhead will mean Wanderers meet up with former player Geoff Anthony again. Geoff is currently United's player - manager.

Of the other local clubs, Marlow, Flackwell Heath and Burnham all have home ties while Holmer Green, who qualified by winning the Intermediate Cup last season, are at home to Wolverton Town.

Amersham Town have a bye while last season's finalists, Slough and Hungerford, are exempt until the second round.

Full draw: Maidenhead United v Wycombe Wanderers, Newbury T. v Milton Keynes, Flackwell Heath v Aylesbury U, Chesham U v Abingdon T, Wokingham T v Olney T, Burnham v Buckingham T, Windsor and Eton v Didcot T, Marlow v Hazells, Thatcham T v Rivet Sports, Wallingford T v Chalfont St Peter, Holmer Green v Wolverton T. **Byes:** Amersham T, Bracknell T, Wantage T.

By STUART EARP Hendon 1, Wycombe Wanderers 2

SPITTLE STANDS BY

PETER Spittle, Wycombe's transfer listed goalkeeper, may be called into action tonight (Tuesday) when the Blues take on Kingstonian at Loakes Park in the Isthmian League.

John Maskell suffered a hip injury at Hendon on Saturday and may not be fit in time. Spittle, disappointed at losing his place after the Sutton game

recently, was put on the list at his own request last week.

Manager John Reardon is expected to retain the side that won at Claremont Road on Saturday which means the 'old' back four continuing as Steve Vass is injured with ankle ligament trouble.

After a useful start to the season when they went four

games without defeat, Kingstonians fortunes have wained a little recently. They lost 3-1 to Croydon and could only draw 0-0 with Hayes last week. On Saturday they went down 3-1 to Leatherhead at Fetcham Grove.

Newcomers in the side this season include Alan Rowbottom, a striker from Hampton and John Overton, the former Woking goalkeeper.